**Storm on the island by** Seamus Heaney

We are prepared: we build our houses squat,

1. How does the **opening** line suggest that the storm was no surprise?
2. In the first part of the poem is the idea that the narrator is not too concerned about the storm. Explain, with judiciously chosen quotations, why he feels initially safe.

Sink walls in rock and roof them with good slate.

This wizened earth has never troubled us

With hay, so, as you see, there are no stacks

Or stooks that can be lost. Nor are there trees 5

Which might prove company when it blows full

Blast: you know what I mean - leaves and branches

1. At line 13 identify the **oxymoron** used to describe the **sea** and explain why Heaney uses it.
2. At lines 14 and 15 identify two examples of powerful **verbs** and explain what idea of the **sea** they convey.
3. Next, a **simile** is used to describe the changeability of the **sea**. Explain what **image** of the sea this conveys.

Can raise a tragic chorus in a gale

So that you listen to the thing you fear

Forgetting that it pummels your house too. 10

But there are no trees, no natural shelter.

You might think that the sea is company,

1. At lines 16 and 17, identify two more examples of powerful **verbs** and explain how these are effective in conveying the destructive force of the **wind**.

Exploding comfortably down on the cliffs

But no: when it begins, the flung spray hits

The very windows, spits like a tame cat 15

1. Between lines 12 and 18, identify four words in the **semantic field** of **warfare** and explain why Heaney has used these - the effect they create.

Turned savage. We just sit tight while wind dives

And strafes invisibly. Space is a salvo,

We are bombarded with the empty air.

8. The **final line** of the poem is unusual and ambiguous. In what way could the ‘storm’ a ‘huge nothing’?

Strange, it is a huge nothing that we fear.

1. Extension. The first 8 letters of the title spell ‘**Stormont**’. Considering that a major t**heme** of the poem is violence, in what way could the poem be a **metapho**r?

**How does Heaney use language and structure to convey ideas about power?**